

CONCORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 6, 2023, at 6:00 PM

Attendance: Jeremy Clemans, Chair; Chris Casko, Fill-in Secretary; Todd Fabian, Library Director; Charles O'Leary; Fatawu Issah; Ali Sekou; Norm Kinsler

The first agenda item was the Call to Order by J. Clemans at 6:02 p.m.

The minutes of the October 2, 2023 monthly meeting, after a previously noted correction, were adopted by unanimous vote, by motion of Mr. Kinsler, seconded by Mr. O'Leary.

There was no public comment.

Library Director's Report

T. Fabian gave the director's report. The e-bikes had a successful first year. The e-bikes visited all 10 wards within the City, which was the goal for the year. The 3 most highly attended events were the National Night Out with 478 interactions, the multicultural festival with approximately 250 interactions, and finally, the Back to School Night at Christa McAuliffe School with approximately 300 interactions.

The e-bikes also visited dozens of places like an ice cream shop and the Newell Post. Moreover, a video will be posted on social media about the success of the e-bikes. In terms of use, some maintenance will be needed. Also, the e-bikes traveled in pairs for safety. It is the practice for the riders to call in to the library when they reach their destinations. The library has received a lot of positive feedback regarding the e-bikes. J. Clemans presented the idea of one e-bike traveling with a person on a second bike so that e-bikes will not be duplicating events. The regular city insurance covers the e-bikes allowing flexibility. A trained volunteer could accompany a staff member on e-bike trips, although so far, staff has been used for liability reasons.

Next year, T. Fabian encouraged trustees to inform him of any different community events where the e-bikes may go to increase the breadth of exposure to reach various groups of people. T. Fabian mentioned that the intent is for the e-bikes to go to events without admission fees. The sunflower festival had a small fee, however, and the e-bikes attended that event, so this is a guideline but is not mandatory.

Furthermore, the Lit Kits discussed at prior meetings have been a big success. The library intends on ordering more kits because they are so popular. The kits have been returned with all items intact, a potential concern due to the number and types of items in the kits.

CPL Foundation Update

The next agenda item was the CPL Foundation update. The grants awarded to the library by the Foundation for next year total \$20,200. The grant money will be used for a wide variety of items. One of the more noteworthy items includes the purchasing of some of Becky Field's art depicting the refugee experience. This display was a tremendous success over the summer, which demonstrates the importance of purchasing it for the library collection. T. Fabian said that the library art collection is in need of updates. The money for this art goes to assist refugees that Ms. Field is helping. For example, she is supporting people from Afghanistan. In addition, they are purchasing more Wonderbooks.

Some of the grant money will be used for swag bags and to acquire more items for the Library of Things. T. Fabian commented that some items, like the metal detector, within the Library of Things have become so popular with patrons that the library is considering acquiring more to keep up with demand. Also, musical instruments and a ghost scanner item have been very popular.

Finally, two other noteworthy items that the grant money will allow the library to acquire is a larger scanner than can scan legal-size documents and books which is important in the effort to scan historical records that are in that less common size, and floor charging stations. Charging stations are in demand and the new stations will eliminate the need for cords to extend over areas where patrons walk, thus avoiding trip hazards.

The Foundation is currently planning for next year's Concord Reads program. An event is being planned for the Heights Community Center next year. The selected book has not yet been made public, but the title is believed to have wide appeal, including for teen readers. Members of the Foundation and library staff will be able to read the book before the event. J. Clemans inquired whether the selected title will appeal to younger readers or the possibility of a youth Concord Reads program. T. Fabian

informed the trustees that a private book festival has selected Concord as its location for next year. The library will be involved in the event.

The trustees and Foundation would like to have a joint meeting, likely in January.

The Foundation has been working on its annual appeal letter. With respect to Foundation donors, A. Sekou stated that the Foundation has analyzed prior donation data in an effort to increase donations. The list that the appeal letter is sent to was examined to identify individuals who may not have donated for a while and to revise the list accordingly to maximize return. The Foundation will track the success of the appeal letter and revise accordingly.

New Business

T. Fabian will be sending trustees a written report about the library and its recent activities. In terms of staffing, the staff level is good at this time with only a single vacancy. In general, the City is focused on recruitment and retention of staff. Most industries are having problems maintaining a stable work force and many workers are staying at jobs less than 6 months. The trustees complimented T. Fabian on his work noting the many innovations that have occurred recently including the e-bikes as above-mentioned.

Old Business

The issue of trustee recruitment was again discussed. T. Fabian has continued to speak with those who have expressed interest. T. Fabian is looking for individuals who have library cards, visit the library, and regularly utilize the library's resources – attractive attributes for possible trustee candidates. J. Clemans, however, expressed that maybe bringing someone on as a trustee who is coming back to the library after an absence could be beneficial. They may have new ideas. Also, finding a new member from Penacook remains a desire.

The new Penacook branch construction is well under way and appears to be on track to open in approximately 1 year.

Conclusion

The next trustee meeting will be on December 4, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m. by motion of Mr. Kinsler, seconded by Mr. Clemans, and adopted by unanimous vote.